

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

A social justice newsletter of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order St. Francis



Special Interest Articles:

- Midwives of a Peaceful Future
- Seventh Generation Interfaith Corporate Responsibility



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Sr. Cecilia Marie Morton, Sr. Donna Wilhelm, Sr. Dorothy Pagosa, Jennifer Dillon,
Sr. Marjorie White, Maxine Smith, Sr. Rose Grabowski, Sr. Shannon Fox
—Social Justice Committee

Midwives of a Peaceful Future

by Sister Dorothy Pagosa

The King of Egypt then spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one who was named Shiphrah, and the other Puah. 'When you midwives attend Hebrew women,' he said, 'watch the two stones carefully. If it is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.'

But the midwives were God-fearing: they disobeyed the command of the king of Egypt and let the boys live.

So the King of Egypt summoned the midwives. 'Why,' he asked them, 'have you done this and spared the boys?' 'The Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women,' they answered Pharaoh, 'they are hardy, and they give birth before the midwife reaches them.'

God was kind to the midwives. The people

went on increasing and grew very powerful; since the midwives revered God they were granted descendants."

Exodus 1:15-21

The story of Shiphrah and Puah is an important one for women who are trying to find ways to challenge injustices. Sometimes you must find ways to go around the rules. There are ways to use the system to change it. In this newsletter, I will share about our involvement in Socially Responsible Investing. *How can we use our stock investments to help build a better world?*

We are also challenging the hateful atmosphere against immigrants by joining 15 congregations to put together Bethany House, a house of hospitality for undocu-

mented young women who have aged out of youth detention.

The Social Justice Committee sponsored three workshops on "White Privilege: What is it? How can we use it?" This was planned before Charlottesville but ended up challenging us to respond by using our white privilege for good. Our associate, Jennifer Dillon, used her skills to help us try to figure this out.

Amid these challenges, we also face the possibility of the threat of thermonuclear war. What are the realities of this type of war? Right now, people in power are speaking as though this might be the same as other wars we have fought. It is not.

Let us continue to be midwives for a peaceful future. ■

Seventh Generation Interfaith Corporate Responsibility

by Sr. Dorothy Pagosa

For many years, the Sisters of St. Joseph-TOSF have followed socially responsible investing guidelines which have directed our investment managers on which stocks to pick and which to avoid.

We were helpful in challenging apartheid in South Africa and not investing in war and war materials (bombs, etc.).

We obviously want to make money on our investments, but cannot use our investments to promote

those items which are contrary to Catholic teaching and peace in our world. This is one way we can be midwives towards a peaceful future.

Through our involvement in Seventh Generation, a

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Seventh Generation ... continued from p. 1

local group associated with the Interfaith Committee on Corporate Investing, we can get guidance on how to use those stocks we do have to work even harder for a peaceful and just future.

I am on the development committee to get new members and attend two additional meetings a year to plan our strategies for the coming year. We are currently working on environmental issues and human rights.

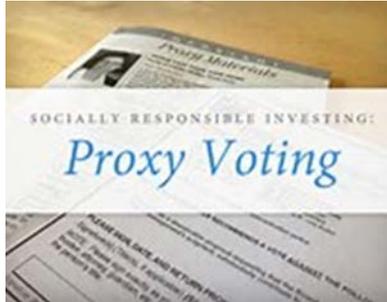
As director for social justice, I vote the proxies for each stock we own. This way I can vote for shareholder resolutions put out by religious congregations or other friends to call for reports on the impact of the company on the environment, worker issues, human rights, etc.

I had been asked to join a shareholder resolution for Sysco, Inc. to call for a report on sustainable palm oil. The company asked us to drop the

resolution. If we did they would join us in dialogue around this issue. The problem was that some of Sysco's vendors were removing palm trees from Central America, causing problems of erosion and other environmental issues. We agreed. I took part in those dialogues and Sysco finally came up with a policy to work toward using vendors that promote sustainable palm oil. This took about two years.

I also look at the makeup of the board of directors. If it is not diverse (including women and people of color) I vote against the board and send a letter explaining my vote. I give them the phone number for the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility which has a list of experienced board members.

Through this effort, we continue to ensure our own financial future and hopefully help to continue to strive for a better future for everyone. ■



White Privilege: What is It? How to Use It?

Three workshops were held in August and September to discuss white privilege among our sisters, associates and their friends. The first one was held on August 5, 2017 at Marymount Congregational Home, one week before the events at Charlottesville, VA.

During the workshops, the participants shared their experiences of recognizing white privilege or racism. After that we watched a video on the Jim Crow laws that were once a reality in the U.S.

After viewing this, we discussed the realities then and the realities now. There are obviously issues that still exist around racism and white privilege. Associate Jennifer Dillon shared her wisdom about challenges we all have.

We discussed how we can use our white privilege to be an ally for our brothers and sisters. Sometimes it means speaking out about the injustices and standing with our friends. At other times, we need to stand back and

listen to the voices of those most affected. We may hear very hard things, but it is essential to listen with an open mind, open heart and an open will. All times, we need to take our cues and direction from those impacted by racism.

In Bartlett and Stevens Point, we also spoke of Charlottesville and the reality that most of the statues they are arguing about were erected during the time of "Jim Crow."

Thanks to Jennifer Dillon and to all who participated in the workshops. ■



*IF YOU DON'T THINK WHITE PRIVILEGE EXISTS...
CONGRATULATIONS, YOU ARE ENJOYING THE BENEFITS OF IT.*

Thermonuclear War: How Can We Stop It

Even A Small Nuclear War Would Still Have Effects on Global Scale

“Nowadays a global nuclear war seems improbable.

After the collapse of the former U.S.S.R. global tensions decreased and the atomic arsenal was reduced over the years. Still, 14,900 nuclear weapons exist, and even a local nuclear war could have [worldwide effects](#).

All nuclear powers, the U.S., the UK, France, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea, possess small atomic bombs, delivered to the target by airplane or missiles.

Such tactical nuclear weapons, involving short to intermediate range low-yield devices, are designed for use in sea battles, to clean difficult terrain or to level urbanized areas.

One such bomb can ignite an industrial area, causing firestorms that last for days, several such bombs can set a large city

burning. The detonation of just one warhead, with the destructive power of 150,000 tons of TNT would still burn 500 square miles of a city.

A local, land-based nuclear war, including the hypothetical use of 50 to 100 such tactical bombs, would send 5 to 6 million tons of dust, ash and soot from the fires into the atmosphere.

Rising into higher layers, this smoke would effectively reduce solar radiation on Earth, causing an "atomic autumn."

Temperatures would slightly drop for a quarter of a century, reducing the growing season of plants by between 10 to 40 days.

Reduced crop production could lead to widespread famine in an already struggling world.

Changes in temperatures also cause a shift in weather patterns. The precipitation during the

monsoon, providing rain for millions of people in Asia, could decrease as much as 20% to 80%.

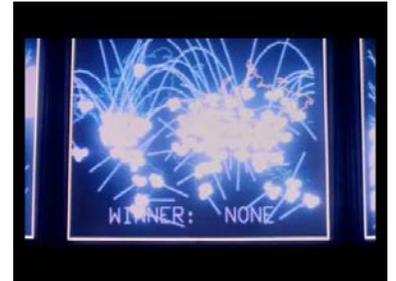
As such large circulation patterns as the monsoon have global effects, also Africa, Australia and the Americas could become drier. Estimated [1 to 2 billion people](#) could face starvation, as many victims as a global nuclear war would claim.

Unrest quickly would spread, followed by further conflicts over the limited resources.”

David Bressan,
Contributor ([Forbes.com](#)
August 12, 2017)

As a Franciscan religious congregation, dedicated to the *minores* and the environment, we need to challenge the bellicose language of both President Trump and Kim Jong Un.

Please contact your legislator and senators and ask them to promote diplomacy as an end to this stand-off with North Korea. ■



“We continue to influence our public officials to pass legislations that supports the human rights of all through email campaigns, public meetings, letter writing, phone calls, etc.”

SSJ-TOSF Congregational
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26th General Chapter

Upcoming Events:

- A presentation will be given in Stevens Point at the Portage County Library on Wednesday, October 18th, from 5:30–7:00 pm. It is entitled **“Human Trafficking: Practical Ways to Identify and Aid At-Risk Youth, Victims and Survivors.”**
- An event entitled “Understanding Islam and Muslims,” designed to get to know your Muslim neighbors and to build peace and mutual understanding, will be held Monday, October 23rd from 7:00–9:00 pm at the Islamic Center of Cleveland.

Bethany House of Hospitality



Fifteen women's religious congregations from throughout Illinois have come together to develop **Bethany House of Hospitality**.

This is a safe space for young immigrant women (18-22) who have aged out of juvenile detention.

At Bethany House, they will be able to work on continuing their education, and continue processes to seek asylum or other needs, perhaps employment as well.

Some will have their green cards while continuing their asylum from trafficking or other abuses.

Bethany House has hired two coordinators:

Darlene Gramigna is a social worker who has over 30 years of experience working with immigrant populations including DACA dreamers.



Sister Jacki Goodin, CSJ is a social worker who has experience in working with victims of trauma.

On Sunday, September 24th, Sisters were invited to a house-warming at Bethany House. There were very generous donations of hygiene products, towels, quilts, pillows, linens, etc. There is great excitement around this endeavor.



The Board of Directors is made up of nine sisters, including Sister Dorothy Pagosa. Sister Madge Karecki has been asked to be a resource person to help the coordinators connect with resources and volunteers in Bartlett.

Please pray, and continue to pray, for the success of this program. ■

“ Stemming from our Franciscan values and the fact that all life is interconnected, members, vowed and non-vowed, are encouraged to be engaged in ministry with those living on the margins of society and struggling to live with dignity.”

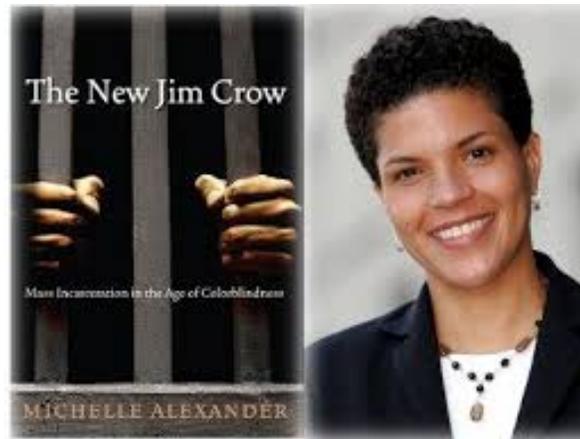
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Resources You May Find Interesting

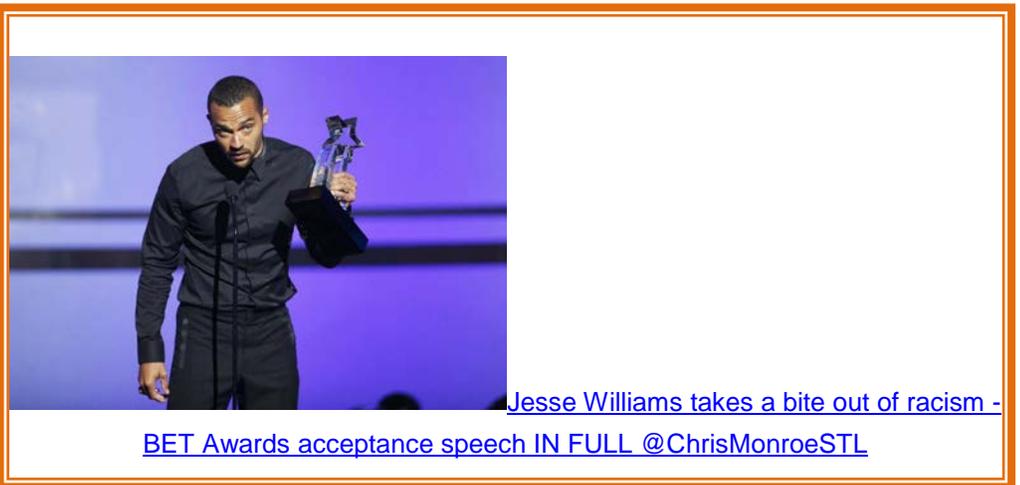
“Stemming from our Franciscan values and the fact that all life is interconnected, members, vowed and non-vowed, are encouraged to be engaged in ministry with those living on the margins of society and struggling to live with dignity.”

SSJ-TOSF Congregational Commitments
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Jim Crow and American Racism explained

Click on this link: https://youtu.be/2_gOtZ--4WE



[Jesse Williams takes a bite out of racism - BET Awards acceptance speech IN FULL @ChrisMonroeSTL](#)



REMEMBER...

We welcome your submissions in the form of

- “Sightings”
- Brief write-ups of your activities, suggestions for workshops, books, articles, films, resources, etc.

Note: The **next issue** of *We Commit Ourselves* will be published in **December**.

Please send any items for inclusion in this next issue to **Sister Dorothy Pagosa** no later than **November 22nd**, the day before Thanksgiving.

~ Your Social Justice Committee